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OO RUEHDU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHROV

DE RUEHUJA #0939/01 1161115

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

O 261115Z APR 06

FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5410

INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS IMMEDIATE 3892

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 000939

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF, AF/SPG, D, INR, DRL, PRM

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM SU NI

SUBJECT: DARFUR PEACE TALKS: AU MEDIATION PUTS
COMPREHENSIVE PEACE PACKAGE ON THE NEGOTIATING TABLE

REF: ABUJA 910

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The African Union Mediation team presented the draft Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) to the parties on April 25. The long-awaited comprehensive package was unveiled in a press event at which AU Special Envoy stated that the AU mediation paper constituted a "just basis" for a negotiated settlement that respects the unity and sovereignty of Sudan. Salim noted that neither side will be happy with the document and it is now up to the parties to negotiate with each other. He also urged the international partners to help the parties close the deal. USDEL has urged the parties, particularly the movements, to read the document carefully before reacting. An electronic version of the DPA was sent to AF, AF/RSA, AF/SPG, and D on April 25. USDEL urges that Department press spokesman call for a rapid conclusion of negotiations in the April 26 press briefing (see para 5). End Summary.

- - - - - AU MEDIATION: "JUST AND HONORABLE PEACE PROPOSAL" - - - - -

¶2. (SBU) Prior to the evening plenary at which the AU presented the DPA to the parties, AU Special Envoy Dr. Salim Salim told international partners that despite the deep suspicions that remain between the parties, the talks have gained momentum in the past few weeks and that the mediation team's goal was to meet the April 30 deadline for a peace deal. He admitted that the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultations part of the agreement was the least fleshed out but that it was included in the document alim old the partners that the AU had done its work and that after the presentation of the document to the parties, it is time for the parties to negotiate with each other. Neither side will be satisfied with the document, but the AU tried to be as even-handed as possible in developing mechanisms to address the demands of both sides. In developing the proposals, Salim said that the AU was guided by the principle of maintaining the unity, territorial integrity, and sovereignty of Sudan as a guiding principle for the mediation.

¶3. (SBU) According to Salim, the draft Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) will be known as the "Abuja Peace Agreement" after it is accepted by all parties. Salim was unclear on what happens after the parties are given the draft, but stated that there would be no plenaries to discuss the draft and that the parties would have to work with each other to reach agreement. USDEL expressed support for the mediation's work and reminded the partners of the need to address the fears of the movements for their future after an agreement was signed. Other partners also expressed their support for the AU document.

¶4. (SBU) In the late evening on April 25, the AU presented the document in a poorly arranged plenary with press coverage. Sudan Liberation Movement faction leader Minni Minnawi was informed fifteen minutes prior to the event, and Abdelwahid Nur was absent because he was outside the hotel at the time of the event. Salim opened by acknowledging the deep suspicions between the parties. He told the parties that three principles guided the AU's work. First, the maintenance of the unity and sovereignty of Sudan as a member state of the AU. Second, the AU is sympathetic to the articulation by the movements of the human tragedy in Darfur.

Third, the AU is not neutral on the suffering of victims and its efforts have been biased toward the plight of refugees and internally-displaced persons, especially the plight of women and children. He urged the parties to overcome the challenges presented by the deteriorating security situation on the ground and their own maximalist positions. Salim gave the parties two days (until April 27) to present their reactions on the document to the AU mediation and expressed his hope the parties would sign the peace deal as soon as possible.

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SUGGESTED PRESS STATEMENT
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¶5. (U) Suggested Points for Press Statement: A strong statement can generate pressure on the parties to stay in Abuja to resolve the remaining issues. Such a statement could: welcome the mediation's proposal and describe it as a just and workable basis for ending the conflict in Darfur; condemn the recent escalation of violence in Darfur; call on the parties to engage directly to resolve their remaining

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differences over the text before the April 30 deadline; and, reaffirm USG support for a negotiated solution and for a stronger peace-keeping mission in Darfur.

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